



STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting
5th February 2010
RCCE Offices, Feering, 10.00am

Present:	Representing	Orgn	Initials
Cllr John Jowers	Chairman	ECC	(JJ)
Canon John Brown	Vice Chair	RCCE	(JB)
Suzanne Harris	CAG & EERF	RCCE	(SH)
Philip Wilson	EcAG	ECC	(PhW)
Dominic Petre	EcAG	EET	(DP)
John Hall	EnvAG	EWT	(JH)
Cllr. Peter Baggott	EnvAG	EALC	(PB)
Cllr. Peter Chillingworth	LGA (Essex)	CBC	(PC)
Cllr Wendy Scattergood	LGA (Essex)	BDC	(WS)
Cllr. Mick Page	EERF	ECC	(MP)
Nick Shuttleworth	facilitator orgn	RCCE	(NS)

Attending:			
Kirsty Monk	(minutes)	RCCE	(KM)

Apologies:			
Joy Sheppard	CAG	EALC	(JS)
Cllr. John Buchanan	EERF	EALC	(JBu)
Richard Woolley	EERF	RCCE	(RW)
Ed Gregory	facilitator orgn	ECC	(EG)
Chris Allen	EEDA	EEDA	(CA)

1 Welcome and Introductions

**Action
By**

Chairman Cllr. John Jowers welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies (*please see above for details*).

2 Minutes of the [SG] meeting held on 6th November 2009

Matters of Accuracy.

No matters of accuracy were raised and those present agreed the minutes as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.

Matters Arising from the previous meeting were covered in the main agenda items.

3 "2020 Vision for Rural Essex, ERP Rural Strategy Launch Event (24th November 2009 Ingatestone Hall) – Review.

JJ thanked Dominic and Lord Petre for hosting the successful ERP Strategy launch in November at Ingatestone Hall and congratulated all involved in its organisation.

SH reported that the feedback regarding the launch event had been very positive. The general consensus had been that it was a successful launch for the Strategy document, which had been well received.

JB was impressed by the cross section of people attending the event.

NS felt that the launch had successfully got the message across that the new Rural Strategy was a living working document and the onus was on us (the Essex Rural Partnership) to make sure we deliver what the document says.

4 **ERP – Looking to the Future**

East of England Development Agency (EEDA) Representation

SH reported that Chris Allen, who has been the ERP representative from EEDA for many years, would no longer be attending future meetings as his role had been redefined and he would be moving away from this area of work.

Fiona Bryant (Director, Essex, Southend and Thurrock, EEDA) would now be representing EEDA at future ERP meetings and would be focusing her time with the Economic Action Group and at Full Partnership Meetings / Steering Group Meetings. She might not attend interim Steering Group meetings due to workload constraints.

Action:

SH/NS to write a letter of our thanks to Chris Allen (EEDA) for his many years of work with the ERP. NS/SH

GO East representation

Since the GO East representative Sandy Cruickshank departed, we have had a number of representatives from Government Office; finally representation was withdrawn as GO East resources were felt to be over stretched. It is possible that GO East may be about to start sending a representative to future ERP meetings once again.

Long term Action:

Encourage and develop the relationship with GO East.

SH/ALL

Elections

SH notified Steering Group Members that the election of the ERP Vice Chair was now due and would be held at the next full Partnership meeting (10th March 2010). John Brown is happy to stand for re-election. SH advised members that if anyone else wished to stand they should let her know. Election of the Vice Chair would require one member to nominate and one to second the proposal. The election of the Chair was due later in the year

5 **ERP Meeting Topics**

SH advised that as the initial meeting of the Environmental Action Group Had not yet taken place that she proposed that we postpone the original totally environmentally focused theme of the next Full Partnership meeting in March and invited members to make suggestions for alternative themes.

The following meeting themes were suggested:

- Affordable Housing
- Local Development Frameworks and process
- Health - withdrawal of rural funding in favour of urban
- PPS4, PPS5, PPS6, PPS7
- Rural Design Supplement
- Reinvigorating Rural Villages
- Transition Towns
- Local energy production

Action:

The Steering Group felt that Transition Towns was the most suitable theme for the next meeting. SH/KM to arrange speakers from Essex Transition towns to give a grass roots overview of how the transition model could work in Essex Towns and Villages.

SH/KM

Action Groups (CAG, EcAG, EnvAG)

Economic Action Group

PhW reported that the Economic Action Group had chosen its initial action priorities at its last meeting in January:

- Rural Broadband
- Economic Initiatives
- Planning and Skills

Joint actions were proposed with the Community Action Group on Access to Services/Markets.

JJ felt that Rural Apprenticeships should be considered by the EcAG

PhW felt that this would tie in neatly with the Economic Initiatives action point.

Community Action Group

CAG is due to make a list of action priorities at its next meeting on 22nd February.

Environmental Action Group

The EnvAG is in the process of organising its initial meeting, JH (Chair) will be working with KM (Secretariat) to revitalise the Group.

5 East of England Rural Forum - EERF

EERF Chair and meeting reports.

SH reported that John Yates the Chair of the EERG might not be standing for re-election in March this year as he had been unwell.

SH reported that last EERF meeting (9th December 2009) focused on the rural economy with speakers from Insight East, Federation of Small Businesses and Maldon District Council. SH asked members to let her know if they would like a copy of the EERF meeting minutes.

The EERF AGM will be held in March (focus on rural development and planning followed by a consultation regarding the Rural White Paper). The Annual Conference will now be held at a later date (TBC).

7 Dr Stuart Burgess Visit, Rural Advocate (Commission for Rural Communities)

PhW reported that the meeting with Dr Stuart Burgess (CRC) had gone very well and they had raised the following topics:

- The New ERP Strategy - explain the differences and linkages to the ERC report
- Affordable Housing
- Rural Broadband
- Role of Voluntary Sector and Communities
- Funding for Commercial buildings
- Rural planning issues and training planning officers to understand rural issues
- CIF Fund model
- Bank of Essex

Although Dr Burgess had sent his thanks for the visit PhW had not yet received feedback regarding the meeting.

8 Rural Broadband Update

PhW reported that the Maldon broadband pilot scheme was proceeding well and they would be working with various groups to discuss what could be done in rural areas.

9 LAA Update

JJ reported that in total £1.5 billion (exceeding expectations) in joint spend had been received in respect of the LAA and the Performance Reward Grant (PRG) had worked well.

LAA Indicator LI 5.1 Access to Services

NS reported that work was being carried out to help retain and sustain local access to services in rural areas and went on to highlight several areas of work:

- **“Pub is the Hub”**: This scheme encourages rural pub owners, licensees, and their local communities to work together to support, retain and locate local services where possible within the pub, whilst often improving the viability of the business itself.
- **10 Good Reasons** - RCCE's campaign to encourage residents in rural Essex to support their local shops and services. The launch event “RCCE Access to Services Seminar” will be held on 4th March 2010, The White Hart Hotel, Market End, Coggeshall, Essex, CO6 1NH. NS invited Steering Group Members to attend.

Affordable Housing

NS reported that the Rural Housing Enabler, Moira Groborz (RCCE) is working to promote and inform relevant bodies and communities as to the benefits of Affordable Housing through a countywide event, DVD and possible Roadshow.

NI 197, LI 10.1 Biodiversity and Living Landscapes:

JH reported the wildlife sites LAA targets were proving more of a challenge. There is a traffic light system (red, amber and green) operating and currently we are showing green, which is positive. Although some very good people were engaged with the work, a few district and borough councils had not as yet fully engaged, although they had “signed up”.

10 Date of next ERP Full Partnership Meeting and Steering Group Meeting:

The next ERP Full Partnership Meeting will be held on 10th March 2010, Marks Tey Parish Hall, Old London Road, Marks Tey, Colchester, CO6 1EN.

(9.30am Registration, Meeting Commences 10.00am to 1.15 pm- followed by a buffet lunch)

A short Steering Group Meeting will be held following lunch at 2.00 pm

Meeting concluded 11.50 am